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No. 938.—VOL. XVIII. [Registered as] SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1898. [a Newspaper.] PRICE TWOPENCE. Per Post, 10s. 10d. per annum

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CONTENTS.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

We offer our cordial greetings and fraternal good wishes to all friends, readers, correspondents and inquirers,—fellow pilgrims and truthseekers, all. Fruitful years are behind us, but we firmly believe that better and richer have yet to come. Above all things, we are optimists. How can we help that; believing as we do in a good and just God, convinced that the Universe is absolutely sane and truthful, and certain as we are that Man is a progressive creature, ever on the march? Not only as well-wishers, then, but as prophets, we wish the world A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Still another enlightened clergyman is preaching our gospel. From a report of a most spiritual and rational discourse by the Rev. R. T. Talbot, vicar of St. Thomas', Sunderland, we take the following:—

Death made no change in circumstances or in character. In the matter of life that was to be, the whole tenour of Scripture compelled imagination to take that as a check upon its workings. Men would be dealt with in the life to come according to their works, whether their deeds were good or bad; and death could not alter this. There was no baptismal wave in the act of death which exercised a cleansing and regenerating power on the dying man. There were no purging fires in the mere article of death which did away with the stains of Nature. It seemed to him that the next stage of life would be a school of universal experience, where the good would be learning to be better; where, as he trusted, the bad would be under remedial discipline, as well. So he did not look to the next stage of life as being the final stage. It seemed to him that there might be infinite stages of life. As a matter of fact, he did not believe that the Bible told us anything about the final state of man. What he believed was, that after this life there was another stage of life, which would be, as he said, a universal school of experience, where the good would be learning to be better, and where the bad, down to the very worst, as he hoped and trusted, would be learning lessons which they might put to account; and where God would be all in all. Answering the question whether Heaven would be a state or a place, he said it would be primarily a state and secondarily a place; for a place was nothing without the state, and it was a state that made the place. Would they know each other? was a question which he answered with another—Why not? Would it be all worship? Yes, and no. He could imagine a time, even in this world, when every stroke of work would be an act of worship, so that work and worship would be completely merged one into the other. He did not suggest that, with all the attractiveness of Heaven, men should despise the earth. On the contrary, thoughts such as he had put before them should make them feel how infinitely important this life was, because the character of a man in this life determined his state in the next world.

'What all the world's a-seeking'; by R. W. Trine (London: Gay and Bird) is not a profound but it is a very wholesome book,—so wholesome that if a youth could manage to like it and be got hold of by it he might easily become a gentleman, a humanitarian and, in the right sense of the word, a Christian. What all the world's a-seeking is true happiness, but it is seldom found, and simply because it is wrongly sought. Happiness is usually sought selfishly: but it is best found, and, lastingly, is only found in willing service. The soul of the book is in this sentence:—

'Freed of its associations, and looked at in the light of its right and true meaning, than the word "servant" there is no greater in the language; and in this right use of the term, as we shall soon see, every life that has been really true, great and happy has been that of a servant; and, apart from this, no such life ever has been or ever can be lived.'

The world will not believe that yet; but it is true.

A clever Professor, at a late Congress, said:—

All scientific men want is that we should doubt the doubtful in order that we may know the difference between the doubtful and the true, in order that we may hold fast to that which is true, for the man who believes the doubtful does not believe the true. The truth never can come to him as to the man who likes to clear his belief of all nonsense, imagery, metaphor, poetry.

This does not look altogether unreasonable, at first sight, but it comes doubtfully near the 'nonsense' the good professor deprecates. 'Doubt the doubtful,' by all means; but why so sharply distinguish between 'the doubtful and the true'? *Is the doubtful false, then?* Is there to be no more of that good old hospitable giving the benefit of the doubt? Again, who is to decide what is injurious 'nonsense' if, with 'nonsense,' we have to clear out all 'poetry'? This looks a good deal like telling us that we must restrict ourselves to a diet of dry biscuits and beans, and old shopkeepers at that.

'The Christian Register,' representing, as it says, 'the liberal attitude,' puts, in a very noble and beautiful way, a great truth. We know none greater; but, instead of 'the liberal attitude,' will it allow us to say, 'the spiritual philosophy'?—

Is there any point in the religious life where we can safely feel that we have attained and are snug in port instead of out on the broad sea of endeavour and progress? Is there any point where we can cease to go forward, and can felicitate ourselves on having become favourites of God,—in other words, on being saved? The liberal attitude seems to say 'No.' As soon, it seems to say, as we think we have come into a little sunny province of the Lord apart from others, we are in a condition to be saved all over again, to be converted to a deeper humility and unselfishness, a more abiding sense of our own unworthiness, a wider understanding of God's dealings with His creatures, a new perception of the universality of His love.

The homogeneousness of the race teaches us to reject the doctrine of exclusive favours shown to a few, and the parcelling of God's gifts. It teaches that the only heaven worth having is a growing and expanding spiritual life secured by a living and growing righteousness. There is no finality at any stage of experience, but always a wider and wider prospect of divine things. Whatever heights we may reach, there are heights beyond. The manna of the wilderness could not be laid up and kept, lest it corrupt. So provincial religion has its dangers. It is too apt to hug itself, and say: 'Now I am safe. I am the favourite of the Almighty. He loves me, and will look out for me henceforth, whoever else may perish.' No, we are never saved, but always being saved. We are never secure of our seat in the kingdom, but must always be growing into some new likeness of the highest ideal, which will prove to us a satisfying heaven wherever we are.

Dr. Pitzer (St. Louis, U.S.) has sent us a copy of a second edition of his book on 'Suggestion in the cure of diseases and the correction of vices.' The work is a thoroughly practical one; and, though small, it gives very full directions as to the procedure in producing the hypnotic sleep and in starting effective suggestion. Dr. Pitzer tells us, in his Preface, that in this work and in his teaching and practice he endorses the three fundamental propositions of T. Jay Hudson :—

First: That man is possessed of two minds, which we have distinguished by designating one as the 'Objective Mind' and the other as the 'Subjective Mind.'

Second: That the Subjective Mind is constantly amenable to control by the power of suggestion.

Third: That the Subjective Mind has absolute control of the functions, conditions and sensations of the body.

The Rev. C. E. Beeby, B.D., has sent out a 'Reply to the attack of Earl Beauchamp.' It is keenly interesting. The sections on 'The resurrection of Christ' and 'The Future Life' are splendid. For 1½d. it will be sent anywhere by Mr. Barrett, Heathfield, Valentine-road, King's Heath, Birmingham. By the way, Mr. Beeby, who writes so lucidly, is all at sea with his quotation marks in his 'Reply,' and some of the printer's errors are very bad. Thus Canon Cheyne is presented as Canon Cheque, and Canon Gore becomes Canon Gose and Canon Gove.

A writer in 'The Harbinger of Light' draws attention to a subject of some practical importance:—the possibility and desirability of using homely language in setting forth the philosophy of Spiritualism. Too often has the subject been discussed with a vocabulary that has been almost irritating, and entirely undesirable. 'LIGHT' lays 'the flattering unction' to its soul that it has set a good example in this matter, though it has grappled with some pretty tough problems. The writer we refer to says, pithily :—

> Powerful language does not consist of long, unpronounceable words, or even words of two syllables, either of which often have very little meaning, but language that most readily conveys, without labour of thought, the perfume of the flower of its meaning, in simple, easy sentences which instantly appeal to the soul.

Mental Science advocates are pardonably fond of the following ancient legend :—

> The Death Angel in the form of a Plague was seen hovering over one of the cities of India. An Angel of Mercy saw him and besought him to depart. The Plague refused to go, but promised that he would claim only five thousand victims from the city and surrounding country. A few months later the two met again, and the Angel of Mercy reproached the Angel of the Plague for not keeping his promise, saying: 'You took fifty thousand victims instead of five thousand.' The Plague made answer: 'In truth I kept my word. I slew five thousand only, as I said. Fear killed the remaining forty-five thousand.'

The quaint writer of 'Alice's adventures in wonderland' certainly hit the mark when, in one of his serious letters, he said that reflection upon the fact of cannibalism knocked the doctrine of the resurrection of the body on the head for him. But was it not Lord Shaftesbury who had his objections to cremation removed by reflecting upon the burning of the martyrs?

'The Open Court' maintains its high standard, but it as much as ever appeals only to unsensational and reflective spirits. The December number contains admirable papers on Fontenelle, Augustus De Morgan, and the Clerical reaction in Europe. A reproduction of pictorial documents of the sixteenth century, by native artists of ancient Mexico, is very curious.

PREMONITION.

A remarkable case of premonition was related to me lately by an intimate friend under whose observation it came in a very forcible manner, and it has occurred to me that it might be of interest to your readers. About the beginning of November (this year) a ship carrying a cargo of oil took fire at the mouth of the Thames, after it had been taken in tow. The fire spread rapidly, and the ship was completely destroyed. Those of the crew who were in the front part of the vessel were saved, but those in the back perished. Among the latter was the mate, a young man who belonged to the East of Fife. Information of the disaster was sent to the town of which he was a native, the telegram stating that he was probably among those who had lost their lives. The clergyman, my friend to whom I am indebted for all the details, was consulted as to what should be done to break the news to the widowed mother, who, with the rest of the family, had some short time before this removed to a village in Midlothian. My friend resolved at once to go and acquaint her with what had happened, lest the first intimation of the fact should reach her through the newspapers next day. In a storm of wind and rain he took the first train he could get, and after a journey of over three hours found himself at the door of the house in which the poor woman lived. Directly she saw him, and before he had time to say a word, she exclaimed, 'My boy is lost! my boy is lost!' 'Perhaps not,' my friend said. 'His ship is lost, but he may be among the saved. We will soon know, however, as another telegram is to be sent here.' 'Ah, you need not hold out any hope,' she replied, 'for I know that my boy is lost.' And sure enough when the second telegram came it confirmed the fact.

Before returning home next day the clergyman asked her how it was she spoke so confidently of her boy being lost before she actually knew that such was the case, to which she replied: 'A short time ago I had a strange dream. I dreamed that I saw my son's ship sailing on the sea. My son was on board, but suddenly the ship passed into a cloud, and I neither saw it nor my son again. Just after this I saw you standing at my door, dripping wet, an umbrella in your one hand and a coloured paper' (the telegram which he had brought with him) 'in your other.' 'This,' said my friend, in relating the incident, 'was almost exactly as I appeared at her door.' I asked him how he could account for such a striking premonition of what was to happen as this woman had had, and his answer was that the only explanation he could offer was that being a good Christian woman, God took this way of preparing her for the trying ordeal through which she had to pass. Perhaps some of your readers may be able to throw some light on this striking incident—which I know to be absolutely true.

W. J.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

A meeting of Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held in the French Drawing Room, St. James's Hall (entrance from Piccadilly), at 7 for 7.30 p.m., on Friday, January 13th, when

MR. J. LAMONT,

of Liverpool, will give a narrative of some of the remarkable incidents which have come within his own personal experience during the many years which he has devoted to the observation and study of spiritualistic phenomena.

PARIS.—'LIGHT' may be obtained from Mons. Leymarie, 42, Rue St. Jacques.

FRAUDULENT PRACTICES.—We note that a 'State Association' has been formed in California for the avowed purpose of exposing the tricks of fraudulent pretenders to mediumship. So long as the association pursues its work discreetly and fairly we shall wish it well, for every effort to banish deception deserves encouragement. We only hope that, in an excess of zeal, the association will not be found attempting to root up the wheat with the tares.

PSYCHIC SCIENCE.

By H. Junor Browne,
Melbourne, Australia.
Author of 'The Holy Truth,' 'The Grand Reality,' 'Roman Catholicism B.C.,' &c.

Written for the International Congress of Spiritualists, held in London, June 19th to 24th, 1898.

(*Concluded from page* 625.)

From the study, during the last thirty years, of the so-called established religions of the world, I have come to the conclusion that they all contain the same moral precepts, though these are expressed in the sacred Books of each sect in different language—namely, that it is wrong to steal, to kill, to commit adultery, to bear false witness, &c., and that it is right to do good. It is these moral precepts, which may be termed divine, that alone have given vitality so long to the various so-called religious systems; all else are gross superstitions added thereto solely in the interests of priestcraft, for as said of old: 'What does the Lord require of man but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly?' That these so-called religious systems have all failed, as is natural that they should have done, in their professed purpose of making their votaries righteous, is palpable to every one acquainted with history and to all who have taken notice of the daily accounts in the public Press of the fearful amount of immorality, cruelty, swindling, and other crimes still prevalent, not only in Christendom, but generally throughout the world.

From the investigation of psychic science during the last quarter of a century, I have come to the conclusion that religion is a natural instinct of the human mind, that it is independent of all books, priests, churches, creeds, dogmas, rites, and ceremonies, and that it existed before these were thought of, and it will continue to exist when these have been discarded by all as relics of ignorance and barbarism. This natural religion which is innate in every human being, though it may lie dormant in some, be perverted by false teaching in others, or be disregarded by many, prompts to righteous action, and condemns evil doing. It comprises not only love to God and man, but also all the law and the prophets. It endorses the golden rule of Confucius, namely, 'Do not to others that which you would not that others should do to you,' which is much more practicable than the golden rule of later times, namely, 'Do unto others as you would have others do to you.' Had this simple religion of righteous action been put in practice in the past, in place of that of priestly faith, or pious credulity in superstitious creeds, what a different account history would have had to record to that which disgraces its almost every page. It is these inexplicable creeds and dogmas that have been the chief cause of nearly all the sanguinary wars, tortures, and persecutions of the past, and of the virulent sectarian hatred still prevalent in our own day, and until these conflicting creeds are discarded by all, we need not hope for the inauguration of that universal brotherly love which all good and well-meaning men earnestly desire and look forward to.

From communion with loved ones who have solved the grand problem, and who can, therefore, speak from personal experience, I have learnt the following: That, as all nature proclaims, there is a divine intelligent power behind all phenomena, both in the physical and in the spiritual domains of nature. That the spirit world is governed by laws as natural and immutable as those by which the physical world is governed. That everything in the physical world has its correspondence in the spiritual world, except fire. Why the latter has not its counterpart I have been unable to ascertain. That man is a finite spirit clothed, when on the physical plane of life, with an animal body, to which the indwelling spirit gives its shape, its expression, and its bearing. That until man reaches the age of discretion, and becomes capable of reasoning, he is subject to the law of necessity; but after that he is a free-will and responsible agent, a being endowed with the knowledge of right and wrong, and with the power to choose between the two. That the death of man's physical body is as natural as its birth, and that, as at birth into this world we are received into the arms of loving friends, so at death, which is the birth of the spirit into a higher domain of nature, we are received into the arms of loved ones who have preceded us, and who were received in a similar manner when they entered into spiritual life. That our condition on entrance into the spirit world is not dependent on our faith or belief in this life, but solely depends on the character we have formed by our daily thoughts and actions here. That in the spirit world the opportunities for advancement are greater than on the mundane plane of existence, with its constant necessity of securing the means of subsistence for the fleshly body. That by the law of affinity we are attracted, on entrance into spirit life, to the company of those of similar character to ourselves, not that character which we outwardly acted when on earth, but that which we really were. That the change called death in no way alters our characters, our desires, our affections, or our opinions; it only alters the conditions under which we exist. That there as here we can advance in the scale of being solely by personal exertion, there being no compulsion to do so there, however, more than here, although progress is inevitable eventually for all. That memory is our only recording angel, and conscience our only avenger. That since every human being possesses an infinitesimal spark from the Eternal Source of all life, so every one is, like his divine Author, immortal. That, in the spirit world, as well as on earth, God is only seen through His works. That the only way we can serve Him here as well as there is by kind and unselfish acts towards those who need our aid. That God requires not the praise of men or of angels, for all His works, in the spiritual as well as in the physical universe, glorify Him. That heaven and hell are states of mind and not localities, as priestly superstition has falsely represented them. That the mind conscious of right action is in heaven, and the mind stung by a guilty conscience is in hell. That in spiritual life infinite goodness tempers justice with mercy in all cases. That *there* punishment through remorse tends to correction, and not to destruction, and proves remedial rather than penal. That *there* love and wisdom have the ascendency in the issue of divine government, therefore there is eternal hope for all.

'A faith, whose parable is plain, and needs no priest to tell;
Its law—"Be kind, be pure, be just; its promise—Thence be well.'"

Notwithstanding all the obloquy and ridicule that has been cast on psychic science or Spiritualism by opponents thereto, the amount of fraud, trickery, and imposture that has been mixed up with it by dishonest people, and the absurd fads and unprovable theories with which others have handicapped it, I maintain that it is yet destined to be the grand enlightener of the world, which will sooner or later unite all in love to God and love to man, re-instate the simple religion of good works as taught by all the great spiritual teachers of the past, and thereby bring peace, righteousness, and happiness eventually upon earth. As a poet has truly written:

'The new must e'er supplant the old
While time's unceasing current flows,
Only new beauties to unfold
And brighter glories to disclose.'

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

'C. V.'—Next week. Your communication reached us too late for the current issue. The same remark applies to letters from other correspondents.

'J. A. F.'—The price of Part XXIV. of the 'Proceedings' of the S.P.R. is 3s. The figures which you saw were a misprint.

'W. B.'—Cannot afford the requisite space.

Transition.—We regret to have to record the decease of Mrs. Catherine Lacey, the wife of an old and much esteemed Spiritualist, Mr. Charles Lacey, of Victoria Park, N.E. Mr. Lacey, we are sure, will have the sympathy of a host of friends in his temporary bereavement.